

Attorney Docket No.: F2040(C)
Serial No.: 10/549,549
Filed: June 8, 2006
Confirmation No.: 3834

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listing of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended) A process for manufacturing a cold water soluble infusible black leaf tea comprising the steps of

- (a) optionally withering freshly plucked tea leaf,
- (b) macerating the leaves,
- (c) allowing the leaves to ferment,
- (d) firing the leaves to arrest fermentation and
- (e) then drying them to yield black leaf tea,

the process being characterised in that the tea leaves are treated before fermentation or before mid-fermentation with a pH lowering agent, followed by treatment during fermentation with ascorbic acid, salts of ascorbic acid or mixtures thereof at mid-fermentation or later in an amount that is sufficient for the black leaf tea to be infusible in water at 5 to 100°C, wherein the pH lowering agent is citric acid, salts o citic acid, malic acid, salts of malic acid or mixtures thereof.

Claim 2 (Cancelled)

Claim 3 (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the tea leaves are treated with the pH lowering agent during maceration or at the beginning of fermentation.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the pH lowering agent is citric acid added in an amount of 0.05 to 5% by weight of the tea

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Claim 5 (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the pH lowering agent is citric acid added in an amount 0.1 to 4% by weight of the tea.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the pH lowering agent is citric acid added in an amount of 0.1 to 3% by weight of the tea.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the pH lowering agent is added in the form of a solution in a single or split doses.

Claim 8 (Original) A process as claimed in claim 7 wherein the solution is an aqueous solution.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the ascorbic acid is added in an amount of 0.1 to 10% by weight of the tea.

Claim 10 (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claims 1 wherein the ascorbic acid is added in an amount 0.1 to 8% by weight of the tea.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claims 1 wherein the ascorbic acid is added in an amount of 0.1 to 5% by weight of the tea.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the ascorbic is added in the form of a solution in a single or split doses.

Claim 13 (Original) A process as claimed in claim 12 wherein the solution is an aqueous solution.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the fermentation lasts for 10 minutes to 3 hours at a temperature in the range 10 to 60°C.

Claim 15 (Original) A process as claimed in claim 1 comprising the steps of
a) macerating green tea leaves after optionally withering the tea leaves

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- b) processing the macerated tea leaves in a conventional manner to obtain black tea, wherein the green tea is treated first with 0.1 to 5% by weight of the tea of the pH-lowering agent in single or split doses at any time up to and including the beginning of fermentation, followed by treatment with 0.1 to 10% ascorbic acid, salts of ascorbic acid or mixtures thereof in single or split doses from mid-fermentation or later.
- c) further processing the tea in a conventional manner to obtain black tea.

Claim 16 (Original) A process as claimed in claim 15 wherein the pH lowering agent is citric acid, salts of citric acid or mixtures thereof.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the resulting black tea leaf is heated with microwaves prior to infusion.